



NOW THEN

GEO LAW | SHEFFIELD'S TREES | FIELD MUSIC
A MAGAZINE FOR SHEFFIELD | ISSUE 119 | FREE



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We're back in black after our customary January break and very pleased about it too. Happy New Year to you and yours.

Our featured artist this month is Geo Law, local illustrator and all-round hard worker. Liam Casey chats to him on p35.

We've got an in-depth piece about the controversial Streets Ahead programme too, which has so far seen over 5,500 street trees in Sheffield replaced. Laurence Peacock investigates with his usual attention to detail.

Elsewhere in this issue, you can find interviews with Sunderland pop darlings Field Music and offbeat comedian John Kearns, plus pieces about urban exploration and Sheffield Adventure Film Festival, plenty of poems, music and film reviews, alongside features on the independent businesses that make Now Then possible every month. Please consider spending your money with them.

2018 is Now Then's 10th birthday year. Plans are afoot, so keep 'em peeled. Yes, it really has been that long...

SAM

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Now Then exists to support the many communities of Sheffield, so we welcome local people to get involved in writing and producing the magazine.

If you are a writer, please read our guide for new contributors - nowthenmagazine.com/sheffield/get-involved - and then contact the editor on sam@weareopus.org.

If you are a poet or prose writer, contact joe@weareopus.org.

If you are a local trader interested in advertising in Now Then, contact james@weareopus.org.

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Regulated by IMPRESS: the independent monitor for the press
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The Independent Monitor
for the Press CIC
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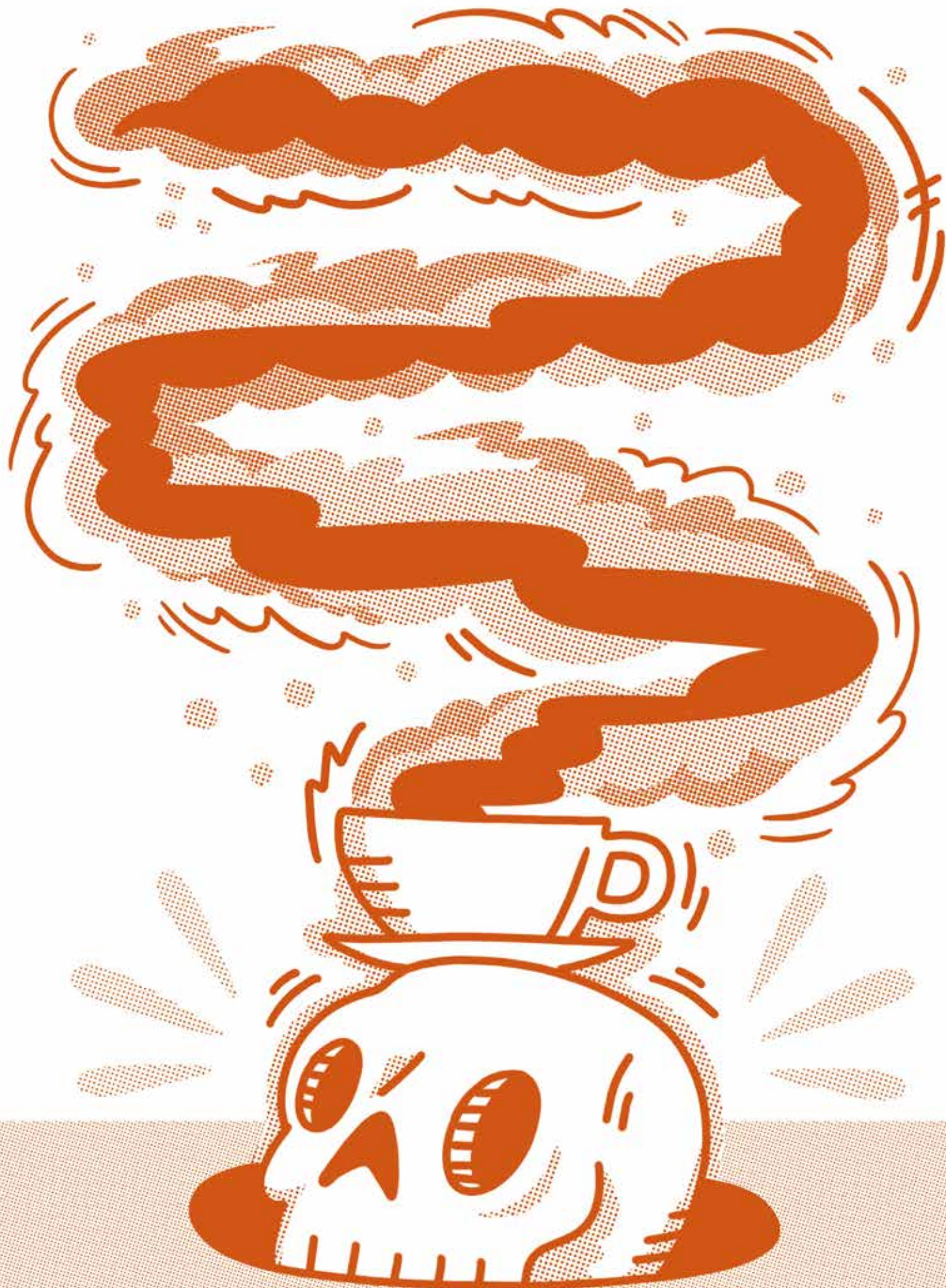
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LOCALCHECK

CITY PLANNING GRINDS ON

Development in Sheffield is slow. It was recently announced that a building on Church Street may become a bar after standing empty for 15 years. The Friends of The Old Town Hall might reply that this is nothing. Their beloved building has languished for over two decades.

Developers are noted for getting planning permission but not going ahead. They blame the market in which, if it worked as capitalists believe, the offer price of unused buildings would drop until someone could afford to use them. This doesn't happen for various reasons, including property speculators hoping for big profits, without a care for blighting our urban landscapes and leaving resources wasted.

Naturally, everyone blames local authorities. Sheffield City Council must feel stretched between ever-changing regulations, budget cuts, panics like the Grenfell Tower disaster, and sneaky incentives like central government money in exchange for city mayors. 'Lack of investment' is due to money flowing where it gets the greatest return. When investors finally pay attention to 'improving' somewhere, seeking approval from the authorities is a pain to them. But they hold the whip hand in one way, because they can legally challenge planning permission refusals. This must mean sleepless nights for Sheffield's planners.

Into this mix steps Sheffield Property Association (S-PA). Formed last year, this is a group of property-focussed companies. Haven't we already got the Local Economic Partnership (LEP) and Sheffield Chamber of Commerce? S-PA was advised by London's Westminster Property Association, "the voice of property in central London", whose annual dinners at the London Hilton are £250 per head, plus VAT and drinks. The S-PA was welcomed by Rob Murfin, Sheffield City Council's Chief Planning Officer, who claims it will be a 'critical friend' to the Council. It's a private sector drive to stir up investment, promising to make the city a more beautiful urban environ-

ment. If this doesn't give you a warm fuzzy feeling, maybe it's because founders like Meadowhall owners British Land have shown little desire to, say, cut car pollution in the area.

The S-PA's formation was revealed at annual property conference MIPIM, a four-day networking event on the French Riviera for discussion of deals to develop 'global cities' between "property players from all asset classes". Sheffield City Council and Sheffield City Region sent ten attendees in 2014. For MIPIM 2018 next month, Sheffield City Region is sending its biggest ever delegation on a bespoke flight paid for by the massive Harworth Group. Let's hope they get their money's worth.

It's hard to believe a group of ordinary people couldn't come together in some sort of democratic meeting to decide how, or whether, development should proceed. After all, we live and work here. We want a city without derelict bits - healthy, sustainable, respecting our heritage. Coda Planning's Adam Murray says the S-PA wants to be positive about the future. "We don't want to talk about the history of Sheffield," he told the Sheffield Telegraph last month. Better not tell the Friends of The Old Town Hall...

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SHARROW LANTERN CARNIVAL LANTERN MAKING WORKSHOPS

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Sharrow Lantern Carnival is an annual treat of illuminated paper sculptures, music and fun. This year it's on Sunday 1 April and the theme is 'Monster Mash'. Lantern making workshops are running now until the day before the carnival and willing hands are welcome. Why not give it a try? creativeaction.net

SHEFFIELD CLIMATE ALLIANCE MEETING

Tue 20 Feb | 7pm | Quaker Meeting House

Frackers are trying to drill around Sheffield at Marsh Lane, Harthill and Bramley Moor Lane, where INEOS restarted its planning application, so objections had to be repeated. If granted, they wouldn't appeal to the Planning Inspectorate, preventing a full public inquiry. Sheffield Climate Alliance is helping to fight this threat. Their meetings are open to all. sheffieldclimatealliance.net

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URBEX

EXPLORING HIDDEN SHEFFIELD

Urban exploration (urbex or UE) is the exploration of man-made structures, usually abandoned sites, buildings or rarely-seen components of the man-made environment, such as drains, culverts and tunnels.

UE purists advocate only trespassing, not breaking and entering, which means that using wire cutters to create an opening in a fence, breaking windows or kicking in doors is against the code of ethics. This forces explorers to get creative when finding an entry point into a structure.

The standard code is, "Take only photographs, leave only footprints".

The ethos of UE is extremely important, because although previously a purely civil offence, the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 created some circumstances in which trespass can be considered a crime. It should also be said that UE is an extremely dangerous pastime. By their nature, old abandoned buildings are unsafe. They haven't been maintained or inspected, sometimes for decades. Rotting floorboards, collapsing roofs and unstable staircases can lead to injury or even death.

Due to the inherent dangers of the decaying structures, explorers often wear dust masks to protect themselves against asbestos and dried bird faeces, which can cause a form of hypersensitivity pneumonitis. Some spaces are used by substance abusers, so care should also be taken to avoid the many syringes that can be found on floors and surfaces.

I started exploring the derelict buildings of Sheffield in 2011 and soon thereafter began photographing these incredible hidden spaces. At this time, there were only a handful of local people visiting them and there was little graffiti to be found. More recently, the forgotten walls have been given new life by some of Sheffield's incredibly talented street artists, who provide a new and ever-changing experience for the urban explorer.

I've seen long-abandoned houses, schools, churches, factories, steelworks, hospitals and vast industrial areas, as well as some rather obscure places, each with its own beauty and fascinating history, often carrying the telltale signs of the people who once occupied them.

Each building is in its own unique state of decay and dereliction, with peeling paint, rusting metal and rotting wood which produce some of the most beautiful sights I have ever seen. The smells you encounter are also quite intoxicating at times, like you get from old books and wooden toys. I've often spent hours absorbing the stillness, just meandering through these spaces or sitting reflecting on what once happened within.

My absolute favourite place was occupied from 1849 until it closed in 2003. The slowly decaying and hugely impressive building consists of many varied rooms, seemingly random in

position and size, with many still containing traditional wooden cupboards, units and workspaces. Sitting in this space is peaceful yet saddening, that a once thriving company and all of its skilled workforce are gone. The place is now frozen in time, yet the busy work lives of the many employees seem to somehow echo throughout.

Shockingly, some locations have been burnt, plundered, trashed or simply left to deteriorate. Others have thankfully seen regeneration, but there are still too many that have become yet more trendy apartments.

The thoughtless sharing of place names and locations on social media, sometimes picked up by the national press, has had devastating results. These impressive places, once protected by the UE ethic of keeping names and locations out of the public domain, have been looted, vandalised and ultimately destroyed.

Sheffield has lost some magnificent pieces of architecture, as well as the history contained therein. There are still many amazing buildings that are full of charm and character, but they are at great risk of disappearing forever, which weighs heavily on my heart.

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Alison Teal



Simon Crump



Calvin Payne

Photos by Chris Saunders

STUMPED

THE BATTLE FOR SHEFFIELD'S STREET TREES

The first thing to say about Streets Ahead, the £2.2bn contract between Amey and Sheffield City Council, is that, in the words of Council Leader Julie Dore, "It's not a tree contract – it's a highways contract."

To be more precise, it is a PFI arrangement to upgrade "the condition of our city's roads, pavements, street lights, bridges and other items on or around our streets". In doing so, private company Amey and their subcontractors have so far removed approximately 5,500 trees. The Council say every felled tree is replaced one-for-one with an eight to ten-year-old sapling, and only removed in the first place if it is dangerous, dying, diseased, dead, damaging or discriminatory.

A lot of people dispute this, most notably the protestors from Sheffield Tree Action Groups (STAG). But passion can also be found on the side of those who want their street trees replaced and pot-holed roads repaired, and are frustrated by the obstruction of protestors. The Council itself points to its legal obligation to maintain the highway. A lot of other Sheffielders, perhaps most, either don't know or don't care. But as the battle for Sheffield's trees continues to play out across the city's streets, in its courtrooms, newspapers and online, it seems a good time to ask: in England's greenest city, how did it come to this?

THE SURVEYS

In 2006-7, an independent survey formed the basis of the tree replacement programme. It concluded that approximately 10,000 trees required "some form of remedial treatment", but only 1,000 were recommended for replacement. So why, by 2016, had the figure increased to 6,000, 17% of Sheffield's street trees, and why have even higher figures, even up to 18,000, sometimes been mentioned?

In 2012, a second survey, this time conducted by Acorn, an arboreal firm that would later be subcontracted to carry out the replacement work, stated that "the majority of street tree species will require replacement after 70-80 years". The Council have referred to this survey to highlight the urgency of the work, but this is disputed by Professor Ian Rotherham of Sheffield Hallam University, who argues that many of Sheffield's trees could "easily live for 250 to 450 years". The Council's interpretation of the original 2006 survey has also been criticised by its author: "Did I tell them that 70% of the trees were nearing the end of their life? No [...] Did I even suggest that the 10,000 bits of tree work were 'urgent'? No."

In response to opposition, a survey of households was conducted on affected streets, meant to determine the level of support for tree replacements. It only asked nearby residents and was addressed to 'the occupier', so one house, one vote. Campaigners also noted that the survey arrived in a plain brown

not being followed was the removal of trees at dawn on Rustlings Road on 17 November 2016, amidst strong household opposition. In their report, which was released at 4:45am on the day of the work, the ITP had recommended felling only two of the eight trees, which were all subsequently removed and replaced. A Freedom of Information request has shown that the Council had the ITP's recommendations at least a month before. The Council say the report was held back "due to concerns about public safety and the safety of the workforce".

THE COURT BATTLES

After the failed attempt by campaigners to subject the Streets Ahead contract to a judicial review, in 2017 the Council gained a High Court injunction to prevent protestors stopping work by entering 'safety zones'. These 'bunnies' – so called because they 'hop over' barriers – would then be breaching the injunction and be guilty of contempt of court. The wording of the injunction states that protestors are forbidden from, amongst other things, entering a safety zone, "that area delineated by barriers erected on the public highway around a tree to be felled."

Copies of this injunction were handed to, or read out to, protestors outside work barriers, in private gardens and public parks, in some cases suggesting that legal action would be taken against them when they were not breaching the injunction. The wording of this document was also changed to "around any

"IN ENGLAND'S GREENEST CITY, HOW DID IT COME TO THIS?"

envelope which could easily be mistaken for junk mail, in their view a deliberate attempt to depress the response rate.

Overall, 13.4% of households responded and the results were something of a dead heat. 6.75% agreed with the replacement programme and 6.65% disagreed. In the view of the Council, this was sufficient basis to claim that "the vast majority are supportive or indifferent", a broad category which conflates support (6.75%) with indifference (the remaining 86.6%), while at the same time confining disapproval rates to the headline-friendly phrase 'a small minority'. Cllr Bryan Lodge has since said of "the Streets Ahead tree renewal programme" that "the majority of people in the city want to see this work carried out." It is not clear how he knows this.

THE INDEPENDENT TREE PANEL

The household survey informed the work of the Independent Tree Panel (ITP), set up in 2015. Where 50% or more of households said they opposed the work, the ITP would give a further view and make suggestions to the Council. According to the Council, it agreed with the panel in 70% of cases. According to Save Nether Edge Trees, a total of 802 trees were considered by the ITP. 174 of these trees were dead, dying, diseased or had already been removed. Of the remaining 628 trees, the ITP recommended retaining 312. Of those, 237 trees (76%) were marked for removal and replacement. On at least three streets where household opposition to the work was 50% or higher – Ashfurlong Close, Burlington Road and Furniss Avenue – trees were removed and replaced before they were referred to the ITP, and in some cases before residents had had their say.

The most dramatic instance of the ITP's recommendations

street", greatly expanding the possible interpretation of its restrictions. More recently, new signs have been put up at work sites, stating that the safety zone "extends to the natural barrier being the wall, fence, or bush or other natural barrier that directly abuts the erected barriers", despite the judge stipulating that erected and continuous barriers on all four sides are required. It sounds like hair splitting, but these distinctions really matter in court.

Despite substantial legal costs, the injunction has largely failed to deter protests. When the Council took Green Party Councillor Alison Teal to court for allegedly breaking it, the judge dismissed the case. Breaking the injunction requires a protestor to enter and/or remain inside a safety zone. As the judge noted, according to the Council's own evidence, once the safety zone in question was "completed... [Alison Teal] left". Labour councillors repeatedly referred to this result as 'a technicality', citing an interpretation of



Chelsea Road Elm. Photo by Ian Wilshaw.

The injunction also explains why private security staff can now be seen on the streets, brought in by Amey to remove any protesters entering a work area and sanctioned to use reasonable force, and why police have begun making arrests again. Between protestors and ‘arborists’, what was once a relatively good-tempered relationship has soured into something more bitter, their differences amplified by the questionable ‘reasonable’ force used by security on elderly Sheffielders.

The Streets Ahead contract was signed in 2012, by which time Sheffield's roads were already long overdue for repair. Most street tree discussion revolves around the 14 'engineering solutions' that are priced into the contract and can be used to retain street trees at no extra cost. The Council's position is that where these solutions can be used, they are, but where other solutions to retain trees would incur extra costs, austerity budgets mean they can't be justified. Campaigners claim that the solutions are routinely ignored and point to instances where the Council say they have been used but seem unable to prove it.

These gaps in public knowledge have been filled with suspicion, mistrust and, in some cases, paranoia. But whereas other cities have escaped their PFI deals by mutual consent, Sheffield Council seems entrenched, even as the tide of public opinion and national Labour Party policy moves in the opposite direction. The Council has also engaged in a PR war, often with little regard for proper context. For example, the claim that Streets Ahead affects 0.3% of Sheffield's trees is only true if you count every tree from Howden reservoir to Meadowhall. The proportion of street trees affected is considerably higher. Similarly, Cllr Terry Fox's 2016 claim that flexipave, a possible engineering solution,

The Council correctly point out that ‘democracy’ means elected officials carrying out public policy according to the rule of law. It’s not for a minority, however motivated, to usurp that process. But democracy means other things too: discussion and debate, meaningful consultation, appropriate compromise on both

sides. In Sheffield today, these elements feel like little more than a performance that must be undergone for the sake of appearance. Against the intractable, redacted and unforgiving terms of the PFI arrangement, such democratic rituals are pointless and powerless. Depending on your perspective, Streets Ahead may or may not have damaged Sheffield's environment – but it has certainly harmed our politics.

Featured photos of tree campaigners by Chris Saunders, whose images form part of the 'Changing Lives: 200 Years of People and Protest in Sheffield' exhibition, running at Weston Park Museum, 6 Feb – 1 Jul.

A promotional graphic for 'Medieval Mayhem'. The background is a light blue sky with white clouds and a green grassy field at the bottom. On the left, a large, grey stone castle tower with crenellations stands on the grass. A princess in a pink dress and crown stands on one of the upper battlements. At the base of the tower, a small archway is visible. In the bottom left corner, a knight in full armor, including a red plumed helmet, stands on the grass and points towards the right. In the center-right, a shield-shaped emblem contains a scene with a red dragon, a princess, a knight, and a small animal. Below the shield is a red banner with the word 'MEDIEVAL' in white, blocky, all-caps letters, and 'Mayhem' in a black, cursive script below it. Below the banner, the text 'OPENING SOON!' is written in large, bold, red, all-caps letters. Underneath that, 'SHEFFIELD'S TALLEST AND MOST EXCITING PLAY FRAME' is written in smaller, bold, red, all-caps letters. Below this, 'Toledo Works, Neepsend Lane, S3 8AW' is written in black, all-caps letters, followed by 'A 5 min walk from Iceland/Aldi Hillsborough' in a smaller black font. At the bottom, the text 'Find and like us on Facebook for more information and exclusive offers' is written in red. In the bottom right corner, the website 'www.medievalmayhem.co.uk' and email 'info@medievalmayhem.co.uk' are listed in black, followed by 'Follow us on' and a Facebook icon with the text 'medievalmayhemsheffield' in black.

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SHAFF

ADVENTURES IN ART

Despite all of human evolution, all our ingenuity, we're still trapped in a perilous position. We live out the solipsistic fantasy of homo sapiens on an incredibly thin crust. Most of that is a wildly unstable and hazardous rollercoaster of earthquakes, volcanoes and violent oceans. Even the places that seem calm and permanent are nothing of the sort. Look no further than Mam Tor – the shivering mountain – or the ever-collapsing cliffs of the East Yorkshire coast. For almost everyone, 'adventure' is not about going beyond the frontiers of survival, but finding a more visceral relationship with the land, water and sky that's close at hand.

I heard recently that careers advisors tell people not to put 'I love the outdoors' on their CV, because it's dull and indistinct. But no-one really listens to careers advice, do they?

Thankfully, the makers of the Sheffield Adventure Film Festival (ShAFF) didn't. This annual event runs at the Showroom Cinema to tie in with the Outdoor City Weekender on 9-11 March, which also includes the Climbing Works International Festival, the Magnificent Seven cycling race and the Howard Street cycling duel. ShAFF celebrates the fact that people don't just love the outdoors, they also love making films about it. And watching them. And talking about them over a beer. These are the people who are inspired by our precarious relationship with the Earth's crust.

What do you see when you look at a landscape? You see what you're looking for, like those inscrutable fishermen who look at a flat, grey ocean and magically see mackerel. Rock climbers are a unique breed of human. They're constantly assessing the world around them for how they can climb up, round or over it. I may be too inflexible and too scared to climb, but I know that the surface of a rock is as dynamic as the surface of the sea. Rocks don't really do small talk, but they're up for a meaningful discussion. They've

seen a thing or two.

Climbers and adventurers who also make art are ideal interpreters between the rocks and the likes of me. You will likely have seen drawings and paintings by Tessa Lyons, Katherine Rhodes and Joe Mallia, and if you haven't, you should. They're all locally-based and they're exhibiting at the Workstation as part of ShAFF. Their Meet The Artist session on the Friday evening (9 March) should be one of the weekend's highlights.

Tessa's work uses contrasts, often in monochrome, sometimes with the strong colours I associate with cave painting. To my eyes, the rock, water and sky in her art is full of faces deep in thought, benign monsters, and trompe l'oeil perspectives into non-existent rooms. Joe's paintings transport you to those places in the mountains where the rock, the clouds, the snow and the sunlight are practising their dance moves together. And while many of Katherine's paintings speak of the shifting wonders of the coast, she has mastered printmaking as the ideal way to make you see the same piece of rock in many ways. Her Stanage Edge series is becoming the definitive study of the Peak District's most remarkable set of teeth.

After several days spent indoors, in meetings, in a flat town, I'm marooned. Just thinking about art that interprets the mountains makes the adventurer in me open one eye, take a deep breath and start packing the kit bag.

Andrew Wood

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FEBRUARY LISTINGS

Friday 2 - Stupidly Delicious Beer Takeover #2 - We have collected all of the amazing, weird and wonderful beers that have ended up in our cellar recently to put on our second 'stupidly delicious' showcase. From 5:00pm, Free Entry.

Saturday 3 - The Blue Taboo Club - A night of original R&B circa 1950 - 1966. Drink. Dance. Repeat. With Lewis Mudford, Tony Crampton, alongside residents Jonny Monk & Tim Jessop. From 8:00pm.

Tuesday 6 / Friday 16 / Tuesday 20 - Green City Blues Dance Class - Green City Blues is a friendly, informal blues dancing night. No experience of dancing and no partner necessary. We run classes for all levels & everyone dances with everyone else. So if you like blues music and like to hug* then come and join us from 7:30pm.

Saturday 10 - Go Go Gorilla - Rhythm and blues DJ night playing classic and rare Rhythm & Blues collections from the 40's, 50's and 60's. There may even be the odd Christmas tune thrown in. From 9:00pm. £4 o.t.d.

Friday 23 - Mysteron and Joey Mojito's Them Sardines - Electronic rock meets Gothic pop. Big beats, songs about love, lust, sex, drugs and death, all tongue in cheek. Supported by Oranj Son. From 7:30. Entry t.b.c.

Sunday 25 - The Fates - What better way to spend a Sunday afternoon than listening to some beautiful harmony singing with The Fates plus very special guests, Daisybell. Starts at 2:00pm. Entry £7/5 o.t.d.

Friday 2. March - Steamchicken - Folk with huge dollop of blues and ska, the powerful four-piece horn section drives a set featuring mostly original material together with their own take on a few classics. Doors at 8:00. Entry £8.

Plus the folk music singing session every Wednesday and quiz night every Thursday.

FOOD

FRESHLY BAKED

Baking dates back thousands of years, when the Ancient Egyptians first baked bread using yeast. The invention of cutters, rolling pins, cake tins and pie moulds have all helped to shape baking, and social change has meant that baking is no longer a luxury reserved for the rich. Together with the development of ovens and ingredients like baking soda, we can bake with more precision and create lighter cakes.

To celebrate all that is baked, we spoke to local bakers Komal Khan, head chef at Make No Bones on Chesterfield Road, and Sara Percevicus of The Bake Lab to find out why they are passionate about what they do, as well as gathering some top tips.

Tell us about how you got into baking?

[Komal, Make No Bones] I first started baking as a very

particularly my gluten-free chocolate brownie cookies with a salted caramel filling. I also love a classic cake with a simple buttercream filling, like my orange & almond cake with chocolate Swiss meringue buttercream.

What are your top baking tips?

[Komal] If you like salted caramel, try adding miso to your caramel instead of salt. Wait till it's cooled slightly, so as not to burn the miso. Also, coconut sugar is a delicious alternative to cane in desserts and adds a buttery, caramel flavour to your finished dish.

[Sara] Always read the recipe from start to finish before baking and try to have all your ingredients at room temperature. Get your butter and eggs out of the fridge at least an hour before starting. Ingredients at the same temperature always mix much better, reducing the risk of the mix splitting.

Are there any recipes you're looking forward to trying

“ALWAYS READ THE RECIPE FROM START TO FINISH”

small child. My mum would buy box kits and we'd make little buns with Tom & Jerry sugar paper stickers for garnish. My favourite part of baking is how meditative it can be. Getting positive feedback is always a bonus.

[Sara, The Bake Lab] Baking has always been a passion, ever since I got my first baking book for my seventh birthday. In 2012, I decided to pursue the art of baking with a full-time course in baking at The School of Artisan Food. After the course, I went to work at Forge Bakehouse for three years, then I branched out on my own.

What can we expect to find you baking?

[Komal] It varies quite a lot, but at home I love making baked donuts. I'll use unrefined ingredients, such as banana, maple syrup, nuts and plant milks, as the finished result tastes better and there's more nutritional benefits.

[Sara] I regularly deliver my bakes to Bragazzi's and Upshot Espresso. I also do Nether Edge and Sharrow Vale markets every quarter and you can order cakes directly from me. I get really positive reports about my cookie sandwiches,

out?

[Komal] I'm looking forward to summer, as I'm going to attempt ice cream and cheesecakes covered in chocolate. Keep an eye on my Instagram, @nutritionlovingchef, to see how it goes.

[Sara] I have just returned from a trip to Amsterdam and I'm keen to bake some Dutch Spiced Cake, a rye-based cake packed full of spices and stem ginger. It's perfect with a cup of tea. I'm also planning on testing oliebollen, a dried fruit-laced doughnut covered in icing sugar. They are eaten on New Year's Eve – but if you like something you should be able to eat it all year round.

Ros Ayres

nibblypig.co.uk

[instagram.com/thebakelab](https://www.instagram.com/thebakelab) | twitter.com/makenobonescave



CHOCOLATE OAT COOKIES

Recipe by Komal Khan

This is a great recipe for making with younger people because there is no cooking involved. It's also vegan and can be gluten free if you use gluten-free oats.

Makes 8-10

-

1 cup rolled oats
1 cup dark chocolate
1/2 cup almond butter
1 tsp vanilla paste
1 tbsp maple syrup
Dark chocolate, dried fruit and nuts

Melt everything except the oats in a bain marie until smooth. Mix this through the oats until they're coated and drop easily off a spoon. Spoon cookie shaped mounds of the mixture onto non-stick paper and put in the fridge to chill.

Meanwhile, melt the garnishing chocolate. Chop the nuts and fruit if necessary. Once the cookies have cooled and set, spoon over the melted chocolate and arrange the toppings as you wish. Leave to cool a little longer. Once set completely, you can enjoy them.

Photo by Komal Khan

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WORDLIFE

HOSTED BY JOE KRISS



It's great to be back in print. We've got four poems for you this month.

Jemima's piece is an extract from her full-length show, which will be on at Wordlife later this month. Details opposite. We also have two poems from new collections due out later this year: Ben Wilkinson's **Way More Than Luck** from Seren Books and Matt Nicholson's **We Are Not All Blessed With A Hat-Shaped Head** from King's England Press.

Watch out for details of our literature strand as part of Festival of Debate in next month's issue. We've got our biggest ever events planned as part of the festival, including collaborations with Manchester's Comma Press and an event marking 100 years of women's suffrage at Abbeydale Picture House.

Joe Kriss

joe@weareopus.org

WORDLIFE PRESENTS: ABOVE THE MEALY-MOUTHED SEA Thu 22 Feb | 7:30pm | DINA | £6/£4

As part of her national tour, Wordlife welcomes Jemima Foxtrot with **Above The Mealy-Mouthed Sea**, following a month-long run at the 2017 Edinburgh Fringe, a fusion of poetry and soundscapes exploring memory, childhood and performance. Waves of sound, weaving storytelling and an ever-elusive punchline. Plus Suzannah Evans and open mic.

"The brilliant Foxtrot is the one to watch."

The Observer

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Streaming

Every January we're surprised again by the way, finally, it gets lighter in the mornings, the year turning in its sleep.

We'll leave work one afternoon and feel ambushed by the novelty of daylight, a dull ache, a happiness we'd forgotten.

A film's flickering into life after months buffering. There's a sense of something shifting into gear: we're headed for the sun.

Joe Caldwell



Jemima Foxtrot



If you have a piece of creative writing you want to submit to us, please email joe@weareopus.org

When you realise

It was in our eyes,
in the recoil of that Spring,
making promises written on blotting paper pages,
in the traction of the April rain.

It was in the garden,
at the end of that sated summer,
sinking heels into lazy lawns,
spilling wine onto uncut grass.

It was in the kitchen,
while leaves were jumping to their deaths,
that we made hot drinks in oversized mugs,
taking turns to turn the thermostat.

It was by the fireplace,
in the colourless corollary of Winter,
drinking whisky and eating chocolates
before climbing the stairs too soon.

Matt Nicholson

Some Relief

Relief as the sunset's small reprieve; relief as the look on the found boy's sorry face; relief in pissing in the woods on a freezing winter hike; relief as belch or burp; relief as the train doors still open; relief when slowly sinking into the bath's warm curve; relief in a filing cupboard; relief waking to the panic of Monday morning moments before the dawning revelation of Sunday; relief as laughter in the company of strangers; relief as laughter at one's own absurdity; relief in the dog's eyes, thundering downstairs to find you home from the shops; relief as waived cost; relief as light strained through the bars of a prison cell, your prison cell, on the day of release; relief in a kindly face; relief in an act of kindness, given or received, amid the city's faceless stream; relief at the kind of day that makes the rest of this life worthwhile; relief in coming down; relief in standing on the fell after rainfall, looking down at the town, the houses, your house, smaller than you imagined, everything somehow more manageable for now.

Ben Wilkinson

Extract From 'Above The Mealy-Mouthed Sea'

Thunder. Like the sky is rubbing its hands on its thighs.
We're snug in the bud of the jungle, other side of the world and sticky-hot.
The sun always sets at half past six and the grown-ups get drunk.
They decide the next day's itinerary and I am made to follow.
I remember nodding off under the clunk of the the ceiling fan,
The thin pages of the paperback collapsed on my sticky cheek.
I always feel like I'm a princess asleep beneath the peach mosquito net.

You have fallen in love, you say, with the most beautiful woman you've known.
I've never known you to have a girlfriend before so I'm not sure how many you have known. She's pretty though,
but lives on this other side of the world
and I don't think she'd follow you home.
I remember how you gave her moonstone jewelry.
I remember how she blushed as she took it.
I stumbled, hit by a 10 foot wave, I can only now articulate it.

I like how some of the other kids can kill fish by throwing sharpened coat-hangers
into precise spots in the sea.
I watched one little girl stuffing handfuls of worms into her grin
and chewing.

One night a pig was being slaughtered at 4 in the morning and screaming like a human,
then was hauled onto a spit to rotate like an idiot above the mean old fire.

After promising not to eat any of it, I was lured in like a fish by the brown skin crackling, by the rich-pig, hog-roast smell like home's roast dinners and what I wouldn't give for a Yorkshire pudding.

I know nothing about love, I have just turned twelve.
But I remember I could see your blue eyes smack of it,
of love unrequited like in the teenage fiction I was reading,
you can't turn more than two pages of your new sci-fi hardback book in one sitting.

It got too much for me, a bit too much for me and I cried sometimes.

Jemima Foxtrot

Jemima Foxtrot will read at Wordlife on Thursday 22 February at DINA. Tickets £6/£4 on the door.



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SAD FACTS

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THE BABY DIDN'T VOTE

"But the baby didn't vote!"

This is one of the typical garbled cries you'd hear from a remain moaner, as I call them. These people constitute two-fifths of my otherwise-gleaming family, which includes me (Nigel), my wife (Janet), Sasha and Grimwald (twins, 19F), and Eoin (8 months old, our sickly autumn years baby).

Janet and I wish to start a new life far from the pot holes, heroin and the rude child at the end of the street that uniformly plague all urban centres. We've got our collective big eye on a recreational vehicle in Camber Sands holiday park, where we can live out our remaining years, sitting still and remembering how angry we used to be. However, our daughters want to remain within the city, so they can pursue their own vanity projects of higher education, skilled employment and access to culture.

Wearying of the endless quarrelling and indecision, I insisted we put the matter to a vote, so it could be settled once and for all. In the words of Winston Churchill, "If democracy can't solve this problem, I'll eat my hat! And between you and me I've been salivating at the thought of my hat all day. I trust this conversation is off the record..."

After a fierce week of campaigning, we converted the downstairs toilet into a makeshift ballot booth. Predictably, the results were a stalemate that wasn't rectified by five further rounds of run-off votes and a relay race around the perimeter of the house. The deadlock hung tight in the air like the Humber Bridge. There seemed to be no solution.

"But the baby didn't vote!"

It's come to this. On Sunday, we have agreed to clear all furniture from the living room, stand on opposing edges with the baby dead-centre, pat our knees vigorously and lie as convincingly as we can to win the support of a child who doesn't know he'll be held responsible for tearing our family apart for the rest of his life.

OFF GRID

I rejoined society in September, after finding that UberEats consistently refuses to deliver 'off grid'. I had only been gone a year, but the world I came back to was one I didn't recognise. After living in a world without advertisements, in a small commune of tunnels built underneath Camber Sands holiday park, returning to a world consumed by money and advertisement was like an oxygen high.

Committed to full reintegration, I had my credit card chip surgically inserted into the subcutaneous layer of my palm.

Unfortunately, it turned out I had what doctors refer to as 'flipped out nerves', an issue which facilitated an unplanned overlap in transmission signals between the bank card reader and my central nervous system. As a result, whenever I pay for any goods using contactless debit, my entire short-term memory is replaced by an instant recall of all bank transactions taking place over the last two weeks within a two-mile radius.

When the problem was finally diagnosed, the surgeon responsible offered to reverse the treatment, but I decided to refuse, mistakenly thinking that this gift would help me find a permanent position within the banking or financial analytics industry. What I discovered, through research and various rejected applications, is that all this information is easily searchable through internal databases and asking a man with a (now substantially swollen) hand is not any quicker.

I tell my story in the hopes that no-one else will make the same mistake I did. Now I work as a driver for UberEats. If someone wants sweet and sour chicken delivered to the five-mile stretch beneath the Yorkshire Moors, I say, "You bet," process their order with my palm, and quietly forget who I am.

SEAN MORLEY (@SEANMORL)



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GEO LAW

AN ARTIST OF THE TIMES

It's likely you'll have noticed Geo Law's large-scale illustrations dotted around the city, as well as regularly popping up to brighten your day on social media. But despite his presence on his home turf, he's also had commissions for interior walls in capital cities across the world, including New York, Lisbon and London.

Geo's work is bold and vibrant, often featuring your favourite musicians, actors and sports stars, as well as many characters of his own creation. But don't take it from me – check it out for yourself throughout this issue. We spoke to Geo about his craft.

You're still living and working in Sheffield. What encourages you to stay here?

It's a great environment because of the abundance of affordable work spaces and I still have many friends in the creative industry that I bounce ideas around with. I love staying in cities

it being too clichéd, but sometimes I don't really think about it. As someone who generally thinks too much about things, I tend to use my art to escape from overthinking – just homing in on little observations, even visual messages to myself.

At times there's also an element of satire, which borders on something more sinister. Is juxtaposition of style and subject a technique you enjoy playing with?

Recently, yes, I've been developing a way of reflecting things I observe and satire is a good entry because of its perceived ambiguity. Ambiguity surrounds us and I play on the idea of apathy due to technology because it's just interesting. I never felt I could tackle these observations visually until now, as I've been working with editorial clients like the New York Times and the Washington Post. Maybe it's part of growing up that I want to question things. I guess I wasn't destined to draw cute characters living in clouds forever – although they still get a run-out occasionally.

“I TEND TO USE MY ART TO ESCAPE FROM OVERTHINKING”

like London and New York, but Sheffield can be a nice respite because the pace of life is how you choose it to be.

I'm also currently teaching at Sheffield Hallam University so that's keeping me here for a while longer, before I feel like venturing out again.

You're an artist of the times, experimenting with gifs, stickers and other new forms. Is the 21st century an exciting period to work in as a creative?

It really is an exciting time for us. Gifs and animations have always been an interest of mine, so it's a natural progression born out of that nagging feeling of, 'Am I stagnating?' Art is interesting to me if you can share it in many ways and giving out stickers is my way of saying thanks to people who have supported me. Gifs give me something I can put online for free usage, as I've an ambition to have my work shared globally, even if people don't credit me for it. I want people to see it.

Your style strikes me as playful and inviting. Do you consciously inject this into your art?

My work is an extension of my interests and moods. Like anyone, I have bad days and I have created works that can reflect this, but in a colourful way. I try and inject a sense of fun without

What's next for you?

I'm hosting a monthly drinking and drawing event called Doodle Club, reconnecting with local people who'd like to draw and chat. I'll also be compiling drawings from these evenings, so I can piece together a zine. I'm also working on video games with students at Sheffield Hallam University, students I've taught in the past. One is a VR experience called Slice 'n' Dice, a first-person manic kitchen simulator, and another for smartphones called Knives Meow, where you're a ninja kitten running along slashing at ninja rats.

Personal projects include getting around to starting one of my many graphic novel ideas, but in the meantime I'll keep releasing stickers around the city and develop my work around satire and popular culture.

Liam Casey

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SOUND

ORIGINAL HI-RISE PIRATES

My first foray into pirate radio was around 1990, when I joined Hardcore FM under the name DJ Tat, in partnership with my old friend, Inspiration. We broadcast once a week between eight and ten, playing the latest house, techno, rave and piano tracks.

The first thing that caught my attention was the network of people involved in the station, from those in the background running the broadcasting equipment, to advertisers, the DJs and helpers answering the phones and taking shout-outs.

Hardcore FM grew in popularity, but was usurped by a new station run by people with pseudonyms that made them sound like seventies reggae acts. Fantasy FM grew to be a leading station in the north very quickly and could be heard as far away as Hull and Leeds. The station was so popular that it hosted a launch party at City Hall's Ballroom, which sold out in days. From about 1991 for the next couple of years, Fantasy FM ruled South Yorkshire's airwaves and rival stations also started to appear.

While the station ran, there were many club and illegal rave nights that the station promoted. These helped pay for rent, equipment, security, electricity and our phone, so it became paramount to run the adverts that promoted these nights, and as DJs, if we ever forgot, we would get a phone call prompting us. The management never seemed to sleep. The studios were sparse, often located in the living room of a flat and usually at least six floors up. If you were lucky, you had a balcony where you could see the city lights sprawling out in front of you. Back inside, there was usually a settee, a couple of chairs, and a long table where the turntables, mixer and microphone were situated.

After a year on Fantasy, I decided to go it alone, as my musical path had become very different to Inspiration's. I started my own Tuesday night show and joined Fantasy's sister station, Sheffield

Community Radio. SCR had a huge reputation and had been long established within Sheffield's Afro-Caribbean community.

The flats were an insight for me into how many people in inner cities lived, and as a boy from a working-class housing estate I realised how lucky I was. Dirty nappies in lifts, drug dealers, sex workers and other things I'd only heard in the lyrics of Grandmaster Flash and The Furious Five's 'The Message' were suddenly much closer to home. A steel plate on the station's front door was an indication that the police could arrive at any time, or possibly a rival station wanting to steal our equipment. It was the ultimate game of cat and mouse.

"IT WAS THE ULTIMATE GAME OF CAT AND MOUSE"

On occasion we were taken down by the police, but after a few days or weeks we'd be back up again, in a new location with new equipment. In the six years I spent on Hardcore, Fantasy, SCR and Dance FM, I must have broadcast from a dozen different flats. One had clearly been recently vacated by a goth, as the walls in each room were painted the darkest black imaginable. Just a few hours in there left you feeling like the life had been sucked out of you.

Andy Tattersall

SOUNDWAVES

The **Arctic Monkeys** have announced their first live date in three years. The Sheffield group play Delaware's Firefly Music Festival in June and are expected to announce more dates ahead of their upcoming sixth album.

In a bid to cut plastic waste, **Yellow Arch Studios** have announced they're removing plastic straws from the front of their bar. They'll also be "encouraging people to refuse the straw", following similar moves by The Harlequin and Gardeners Rest pubs.

After two successive festivals that saw acts including Jagwar Ma and Roots Manuva come to Sheffield, **Outlines Festival** has been permanently cancelled. The Tramlines spring spin-off cited financial reasons for its downfall, saying they would "not be able to afford to run it again".

After running into licensing problems at their current home, **The Lughole** have at the time of writing raised £6,280 towards a £10k target to open a new venue. The punk practice space are already in talks with the owners of a new site and are asking for donations at gofundme.com/lughole-ii.

LIVE REVIEWS

BEN OTTEWELL

17 January
The Greystones

It can be a daunting prospect when entering a venue to see a lone acoustic guitar and microphone sat on stage, awaiting the performer. Every music fan worth their salt has endured their fair share of well-meaning but ultimately bland musicians, strumming away and singing to seemingly no one's pleasure but their own. Just think of almost every house party, bonfire, barbecue or social gathering you've ever been to. So many memories tainted by the familiar twang of the poorly-played acoustic guitar. It's become an instrument synonymous with the hobbyist, the hopeful amateur.

But when Ben Ottewell saunters on stage looking like a confessional poet of sixties America – relaxed and a little bedraggled, but with the bookish edge of John Berryman – and begins playing, it quickly becomes clear that here is a man who still knows how to get the most out of his instrument, and even more so his voice, famous for its deep, rasping sincerity. His setlist is a crowd-pleasing mix of new and old material, primarily solo work but peppered with songs he wrote for his former band Gomez, who won the Mercury Prize back in 1998.

While a seated venue in the backroom of a pub with a capacity of 150 isn't exactly Kanye headlining Glastonbury, it's testimony to Ottewell's long career as a performer that the room is captivated throughout, and anyway it's this kind of intimate ambience that lends itself best to the singer-songwriter. It adds a particular kind of earthy wisdom to the themes of his songs, as though they're reflections on a life not far removed from the experiences of his audience, changing the dynamic of the performance into something more akin to the bardic roots of his folk rock genre.

Liam Casey

SHAH E MAARDAN

13 January
Regather

Writing on the BBC's website, Asian Network presenter Bobby Friction defines qawwali music as "the physical and musical manifestation of the Sufi religious tradition in South Asia". Emerging in the area that is now India and Pakistan in the 13th century, the form sees tablas, dholaks and ecstatic chanting work together to evoke a spiritual union with God, both for the performers and the audience. Led by singer Mohamed Zubair, Shah e Maardan are a group of qawwali players based in Sheffield and Bradford, with sell-out gigs at Regather and Hallam Students' Union already under their belts.

Before their sold-out return to Regather and during the interval, we were treated to cuts from the late Charanjit Singh's groundbreaking **Ten Ragas to a Disco Beat**, a 1982 record that accidentally invented acid house by setting ancient Indian songs to synthesisers and drum machines. This smart choice on the PA opened our minds in preparation for a marathon two-and-a-half hour performance from Shah e Maardan, with songs that frequently stretched well beyond the 20-minute mark.

Even as a secular observer I felt overwhelmed by the sense of devotional fervour that the nine-man group built up during each piece, layer upon layer, without any rush to reach a resolution. At points the cascading percussion and euphoric vocalists reminded me of the joyous abandon channelled by late-nineties Boredoms. Every song started with the musicians taking turns to sing, each introducing a new vocal melody, before complex polyrhythms gradually took hold and led us to a sonic apex that glittered with possibilities often left unexplored by western music.

With most of the audience unable to stop themselves from drumming along on their chairs, we were invited to our feet in the climactic minutes of the final piece, dancing as the sound crashed against us like successive waves.

Sam Gregory

LIVE PICKS

The cancellation of Outlines Festival is a reminder of what fragile foundations the UK live music scene rests on. After the big boom of new festivals in the mid-noughties, recent years have seen event after event cancelled due to sluggish sales and spiralling costs, with Y Not, All Tomorrow's Parties and T in the Park among the most high-profile casualties. I'll remember 2017 for the ecstasy and the agony of Safe as Milk, a dream line-up of Shirley Collins, OOIOO, The Residents and Dopplereffekt cruelly snatched away from us in the spring.

Outlines said that 2017's event lost money and that they'd had no success in finding business partners to take the event on. DIY band Enablers have also cancelled 2018 shows, writing that touring isn't sustainable when admission to smaller venues has remained around a fiver for over a decade. To keep the vibrancy of the scene alive, we may all have to dig a little deeper.

DJ BUS REPLACEMENT SERVICE & DJ GURL POWER

Sat 3 Feb | Venue TBA | £9.10

Not many DJs would have the chutzpah to pull off playing the 'Working As A Waitress' remix of The Human League to the chin-stroking connoisseurs at Freerotation Festival, but then again, not many DJs call themselves Bus Replacement Service. The anti-revisionist happy hardcore of DJ Gurl Power rounds out another agreeably odd affair from Cut Some Capers.

THOMAS TRAUX

Wed 7 Feb | Greystones | £8.80

That most idiosyncratic of Americans returns to Sheffield in support of his new record, **All That Heaven Allows**. Writing your own songs is passé now. Taux invents his own instruments to play them on, such as the Cadillac Beatspinner, a 'motorized mechanical sound sculpture', and the Slinkopator, love child of a Slinky and a drum kit.

BETH ORTON

Thu 8 Feb | Plug | £20.74

Veteran singer-songwriter Beth Orton's most recent album, **Kidsticks**, saw her combine well-crafted songwriting with a more radical approach to production, working with Andrew Hung of Fuck Buttons fame on tracks such as the other-worldly 'Moon'. Support TBC.

LSS 11TH BIRTHDAY W/ DJ CHAMPION, SLICK DON, KILLJOY

Fri 9 Feb | Yellow Arch | £9.10

Eleven is a long time in promoter years, but you can put the longevity of Liquid Steel Sound down to their excellent bookings, such as Champion, who is busy turning out some of the sharpest sounds in club music today. Also cutting the cake will be Nottingham's Killjoy and Brum grime superstar Slick Don.

BRITISH SEA POWER

Fri 9 Feb | Leadmill | £17.60

Returning to our fair city for the first time in four years are Brighton's foremost purveyors of anthemic but intelligent rock music. Their formidable back catalogue touches on subjects ranging from ketamine to Canvey Island, from the fear of senility to forgotten Dadaist Kurt Schwitters. The band are the masters of the craft.

BAHLA

Wed 14 Feb | The Holt | £9

Branching out from their Sharrow Vale base, the Jazz at the Lescar team head into town with London quintet Bahla in tow, who combine wide-eyed and ambitious jazz with Jewish folklore, contemporary rock and heart-stopping vocals from singer Inês Loubet.

THE BLACK MADONNA, ND_BAUMECKER, ERIS DREW

Fri 16 Feb | Hope Works | £22.40

Despite building a near-religious following in the city for two decades, for those outside Chicago The Black Madonna has exploded out of nowhere to become house music's most in-demand selector. She's supported by Panorama Bar regular Nd_Baumecker, plus fellow Chicagoan and recent Resident Advisor podcast star Eris Drew.

THE ORIELLES

Sat 17 Feb | Yellow Arch | £9.90

Named after a Toronto bar, **Silver Dollar Moment** is the debut LP from Halifax three-piece The Orielles, who explain the term means "anything that's unexpectedly brilliant", which could be an apt description of the album's jangly first single, 'Let Your Dogtooth Grow'.

JIM GHEDI

Sat 17 Feb | Upper Chapel | £9.10

In January's Now Then, we called Jim Ghedi's debut album, **A Hymn For Ancient Land**, 'rapturous'. He launches the record at the Upper Chapel, with the unaccompanied traditional singers of Landless in support, as well as a screening of Ian Nesbitt's social history doc, **Settlers in England**.

CHOUK BWA LIBÈTE

Wed 28 Feb | Firth Hall | £14.50

This eight-person group from Gonaïves, Haiti play mizik rasin ('roots music'), an integral part of the Haitian vodou tradition. This semi-improvised style uses drums, cornets, vocal chants and dance to reach a spontaneous state of joy, driven forward by poet and lead vocalist Sambaton Dorvil.

HOSTED BY SAM GREGORY

RECORD REVIEWS



HOOKWORMS

Microshift

Have you ever driven late at night through a tunnel, windows slightly open? Between the thumping gusts of wind pushing through the window, there's a hum created between the tyres, the asphalt and the tunnel's acoustics. It can be unnerving, but at the same time mesmerising.

The music of Leeds band Hookworms always felt like that. Bright fluorescent lights howling, droning cascades and explosive sounds that terrify and soothe. **Microshift** exudes an oppressive atmosphere in every track, but as any Hookworms connoisseur will tell you, there's a bright layer of hope in the lowest layers of their music. Even if depression is still steering the wheel, shimmering lights flash in the dark vehicle.

Microshift never meanders, with an unforgiving pace that allows pop sensibilities and psychedelia to live in a symbiotic relationship. 'Opener' and 'Negative Space' come from this union, blessed with being hook-laden while still giving you a satisfying soundscape. 'Each Time We Pass' is almost a ballad, with a rich atmosphere that never wallows in depression, just acknowledges it. 'Ullswater' manages to blend Hookworms' primordial sound with Neu! and Jean-Michel Jarre.

Mind you, if you dig Hookworms better when they're abstract, 'Boxing Day' and 'Reunion' are the treacherous patch of black ice on a low-lit pop highway, one that lays a new path for the band to travel. With Microshift, Hookworms left that hazy autobahn that led to purple hills and orange skies, finally finding themselves out of the tunnel and heading into vast, unknown horizons.

Sam J. Valdés López



OPHELIA

Blackbox Memories

Showcasing the talents of singer-songwriter duo Samuel Taylor and Rebecca Van Cleave, Ophelia's debut album **Blackbox Memories** pushes genre boundaries, offering a new and refreshing sound. The record is intriguing chiefly due to its attempts to borrow sounds from two distinct eras, representing both modern and classic light rock, further emphasised by Taylor and Van Cleave's hypnotising voices.

Each offering on the 13-track record displays the duo's welcoming sound. Starting with the upbeat 'Let Love Ride In', it develops like a work of art, exploring a range of genres, moods, tempos and themes. Both Taylor and Van Cleave's voices add to the mesmerising atmospheres created on each track. From serene tracks like 'The Artist' to catchier numbers like 'Fading', Blackbox Memories has something for everyone.

The title track has a welcoming country twang to it – a theme throughout – while others represent the folk scene. 'Whip of the Wheel' moves into classic light rock territory, with its simple yet pacy beat and conventional band setup.

These tracks do justice to the vocally powerful pair, with each song possessing its own character, as well as highlighting the musical proficiency of this talented duo.

Produced by Greg Haver, mixed by Clint Murphy and mastered by Ryan Smith, the musicianship behind the album can clearly be heard through the great sound quality and delicate mixing of the tracks, as well as the strength of the compositions themselves. This is an all-star line-up of talented musicians.

Alex Burns

BOILER ROOM RETURNS TO SHEFFIELD FOR A TWO-NIGHT CELEBRATION OF THE CITY'S DANCE MUSIC TALENT FROM '88 TO 2018. TITLED SHEFFIELD: SHAPED THE FUTURE, THE FIRST NIGHT ON SUNDAY 4 FEBRUARY WILL SEE WARP LEGENDS NIGHTMARES ON WAX, PLAID AND WINSTON HAZEL DJ, ALONGSIDE LIVE SETS FROM CPU ARTISTS TRYPHÈME AND NEIL LANDSTRUMM. CATCH THE PARTY AT [BOILERROOM.TV](https://boilerroom.tv).



PEOPLE HERE

Outlast The Earth

People Here may only be in their infancy as a band, but the members individually are no strangers to Sheffield's music scene or the world of recording. Having all experienced some success in previous ventures across the genre spectrum, it's no surprise that their first EP as a collective is a hit.

The band describe themselves as 'ghost pop/post-ghost punk', which, although not a term I've come across before, makes sense. The reverb-heavy, haunting vocals of US-born Raquel Vogl can definitely be described as ghostly and the supernatural themes in her lyrics match closely. Though there's an accessibility to all three tracks which warrants the 'pop' tag, there are still elements of garage punk which give more of an underground feel to the record.

Whilst maintaining coherency, each of the three tracks has something different to offer. Opener 'Eat' is a personal favourite, feeling laidback yet bursting with energy, whereas track two, 'Half Woman Half Witch', has more of a melancholic tone. The final song, 'Life To Lists', features harmonies reminiscent of Stealing Sheep and Daughter, but People Here bring their own flavour to the soft vocals which have become popular this decade by combining them with breaks of heavier guitar.

Outlast The Earth is available to download now on a pay-as-you-feel basis. Although People Here have only played a handful of gigs so far, I'm crossing my fingers that we'll see a lot more of them this year.

Tasha Franek



THE ORIELLES

Silver Dollar Moment

I've seen The Orielles perform a few times and one of the most striking things about them is their youth, often playing in venues where they'd be too young to attend the gig themselves. Their nascency is, however, striking in its absence from **Silver Dollar Moment**, a polished and mature debut album that follows the usual procession of CDR, cassette and 7" releases.

The breadth of influence on display and the success with which it's employed are particularly impressive. Within 12 tracks of what you'd otherwise loosely call indie-pop, you can hear shades of post-punk, disco, funk, psych, surf rock, garage rock and prog, and none of it feels forced or out of place. OK, prog might be a stretch, but 'Henry's Pocket' features a flute, so I'm sticking with it.

Most of the tracks are finely-tuned individual pop songs, but 'The Sound of Liminal Spaces' is the track that captures the sense of spontaneity that's been my favourite part of their live performances. It's a free-wheeling funky psych jam of bass, guitar, synth and bongos that expands the mood of the previous ballad into a totally different realm. Unfortunately, as the shortest track of the album, it's a wasted opportunity that ends up as little more than an interlude.

While compromises like that are inevitable when any band makes a conventional studio album, The Orielles have put the studio to good use to expand their sound with additional instrumentation, in particular synthesiser, beyond their traditional guitar, bass and drums set up.

Michael Hobson



FIELD MUSIC

SUNDERLAND'S NUMBER ONE SIBLING SUCCESS STORY

Undoubtedly Sunderland's number one sibling success story, the Brewis brothers have been writing, recording and performing together as Field Music on and off for the last 14 years, building up a considerable fan base.

Their last release in 2016, *Commontime*, was hailed as their most accessible album to date, bringing a collection of new fans – including Prince, according to Twitter – who have been excitedly awaiting the follow-up.

We managed to catch a few minutes to chat with Peter Brewis about the new record, *Open Here*, set for release on 2 February.

What have you been up to since releasing *Commontime* two years ago?

Well, good question. When *Commontime* came out we played that quite a bit. We were touring, generally just at weekends. We find it keeps it fresher just playing at the weekends and we can see our respective families without being away for too long. We did go to the States for a few weeks though, which we haven't done for something like five years. After that we did a couple of extra bits, but got straight on with writing this record.

So has the album been in the pipeline a while?

Yes, we started recording probably last February, but we're always doing other things as well, so it takes a while. We have our own studio space, although saying that we're moving studio at the moment. By taking our time doing things, it means we can be very specific about how we want things to sound and what we want to write about. We can revisit and re-do things and scrap songs if we want to scrap songs.

If *Commontime* is considered your pop album, what's *Open Here*?

It seems to be in all different directions at once. I think it's got a few things which I would say are sort of 'poppy', but in our sense of the word. I think everybody likes the pop music that they grew up listening to, the pop music that speaks to them. Our idea of pop music is totally different to other people's view. We do listen to contemporary pop music, but as curios really. We know it's not intended for us.

But there are definitely influences of our generation of pop music in the late eighties. For instance, in one of David's songs, 'Count It Up', I listened to it and I thought, "God, that sounds like 'Material Girl'". I don't think he necessarily meant it to sound like that, but there's a glimpse of Madonna in there.

Was it a deliberate decision to give the album more of an eighties feel or did that happen naturally?

I think it's just some of the sonic traits that we're into. I don't think there could be a record like *Open Here* made in the eighties. It just wouldn't have happened. But I think there are certain sounds that we're drawn to from that time.

fatherhood. Does *Open Here* follow any more of your life events or is it all more politically charged?

The thing is, even the politics always comes from a personal reflection of things. There have been some challenging personal things that have gone on. We've lost friends who were close to the band, had big personal issues. Then on top of that, when you're looking at world events, you see children, refugees and kids who are struggling in the world, and I think that now, being a dad, we can see that. 'Shit, that could be my child.' It becomes a more emotional and personal thing for me in a way that I wasn't able to feel before.

Do you find it easier to juggle family life and the band, being brothers? Is there less pressure in having to be formal about getting together to write and record?

Yes, there is less pressure. Dave and I don't always need to be in the studio together. It makes sense in the way that we work. It's not easy, but it must be easier than some people that have 9-to-5 jobs, where they have to arrange childcare. I can't complain.

You've talked in the past about the lack of profit in being a full-time musician. Have things changed for you over the years with *Field Music*?

A little bit. But I mean still, I think people are surprised by what me and Dave are able to live on. Again, I'm not complaining about that. It's absolutely fine. We're lucky with the position that we're in.

Are you touring the new album?

"EVERYBODY LIKES THE POP MUSIC THAT THEY GREW UP LISTENING TO"

Did you have any direct influences specifically for this album?

I think with any record we make, in relation to the music that I'm into, it all gets filtered into the idea of making a record. Records are there to present rock and pop music really. So all the influences I have outside of rock and pop music, you can't really hear them. It just sounds like a rock/pop record, which is what all records are really. But that's alright. We're always trying to push ourselves in new directions and I feel like we're always trying to test the boundaries of what will make a coherent record.

Did you have anybody else working with you on the album?

We have a lot more people on this record than we've ever had, which gives us more freedom. Vocally, we have Liz [Corney], who's in the live band. She's done a little bit of recording with us before, but we've had her much more involved this time. We've got a quasi-choir at the end. I think because we knew we were leaving the studio where we've been for eight years, we tried to get more people involved and get a community atmosphere about it. It's been kind of dark times, especially in the past two years. The world in general has been an odd, weird, dark place. There have been personal circumstances as well which have been testing. I think we tried to defy that gloomy feeling. You know it's in there but we've tried to do our thing. There are a lot of people who are very good at making gloomy, dark music but we can't do it, just like they can't make music the way we do. It's the way we deal with things, like, 'Right, what are we going to do about this?'

On your last album you touched on your introduction to

Yes. Well, we're starting by doing something slightly preposterous in that we're doing three shows in Newcastle on 2 and 3 February, with one being a matinée for the kids. We're doing that at Northern Stage. It's going to be a theatrical show, with everybody who has played on the album.

Will the rest of the UK tour just feature the core band?

It was meant to be that way, but different people have said they can play different shows, so each show will be a bit different.

Is there anything else to look out for from *Field Music* or either of you individually?

Me and Dave are always doing new things, so I think there will be. We're moving studios at the minute and I'm just trying to finish up an album I'm doing with Sarah Hayes, so lots going on.

Tasha Franek

Field Music play The Foundry on 23 March. Tickets are priced at £16.50 via foundrysu.com. The new album, *Open Here*, is out now.

HEADSUP

JOHN KEARNS

After making history by being the only comedian to win both Best Newcomer and Best Show at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, John Kearns is about to embark on his first ever national tour with his latest show, *Don't Worry, They're Here*. We caught up with him to discuss the show, his career and his false teeth.

This will be your first festival show to tour nationally. What made you decide now was the time to begin touring?

I've only ever gone round the country scratching out previews, so I thought it was high time I actually performed the finished article. I haven't got a clue how it's going to go, which is why I've left it till now, I suppose. This is my third show, so I feel I'm better equipped to tour.

You're the only comedian to win both Best Newcomer and

“MY RELATIONSHIP WITH AN AUDIENCE IS TRICKY”

Best Show at The Edinburgh Fringe. What effects, good or bad, has this had on your career?

The awards are certainly the reason why I could quit my job and go full time. My career has been defined by them and it gives me a confidence that I know what I'm doing. Sometimes you just need to be told, “You're right. Keep going.”

Receiving such a meteoric rise in profile must have enticed a much more general audience. In what way do you try to cultivate a specific audience that you think will enjoy your material?

I don't know how to cultivate an audience. You have to just follow your instinct and create something that you hope people like. I, of course, hope people turn up as it's my job, but my relationship with an audience is tricky, I think. I don't trust them. I try to be the best I can be, but for me. I'm not wasting my time up there. It took me a long time to realise that they're just watching you do something. I know that sounds simplistic, but that's all an audience do. They're just watching you do something.

What is *Don't Worry, They're Here* about? What are you trying to achieve with the show?

The show is about luck, nostalgia and how in life you never know what's round the corner. When I start writing a show, I basically hope it's funny enough and runs to time. Only then can

you experiment with flights of pretension and set pieces which crash and burn. The show is then created as you rifle through the embers to see what you can salvage.

I only know the word ‘tonsure’ because of you. How did your costume – a monk’s wig and false teeth – come about and why did it become a standard part of your act?

I also only know the word ‘tonsure’ because of me. The short answer is that I felt funny wearing the get up. I looked stupid, I felt stupid, it freed me up and bizarrely meant I could be taken seriously when I wanted to be, as the funny was taken care of. Early on, a couple of people would say I looked like someone they couldn't stand and it's only when they hear me that they like the act.

Over the years it's thrown up a lot of questions – the idea of the mask, a comic's persona, truth. I like playing with the ambiguity, which can be treated by some critics with suspicion. But for an audience to be suspicious, curious... That's no bad thing.

What are your future plans beyond this tour?

Design furniture.

Sean Morley



Don't Worry, They're Here comes to Sheffield on 22 February at DINA, Cambridge Street.

More information at johnkearnstour.com.

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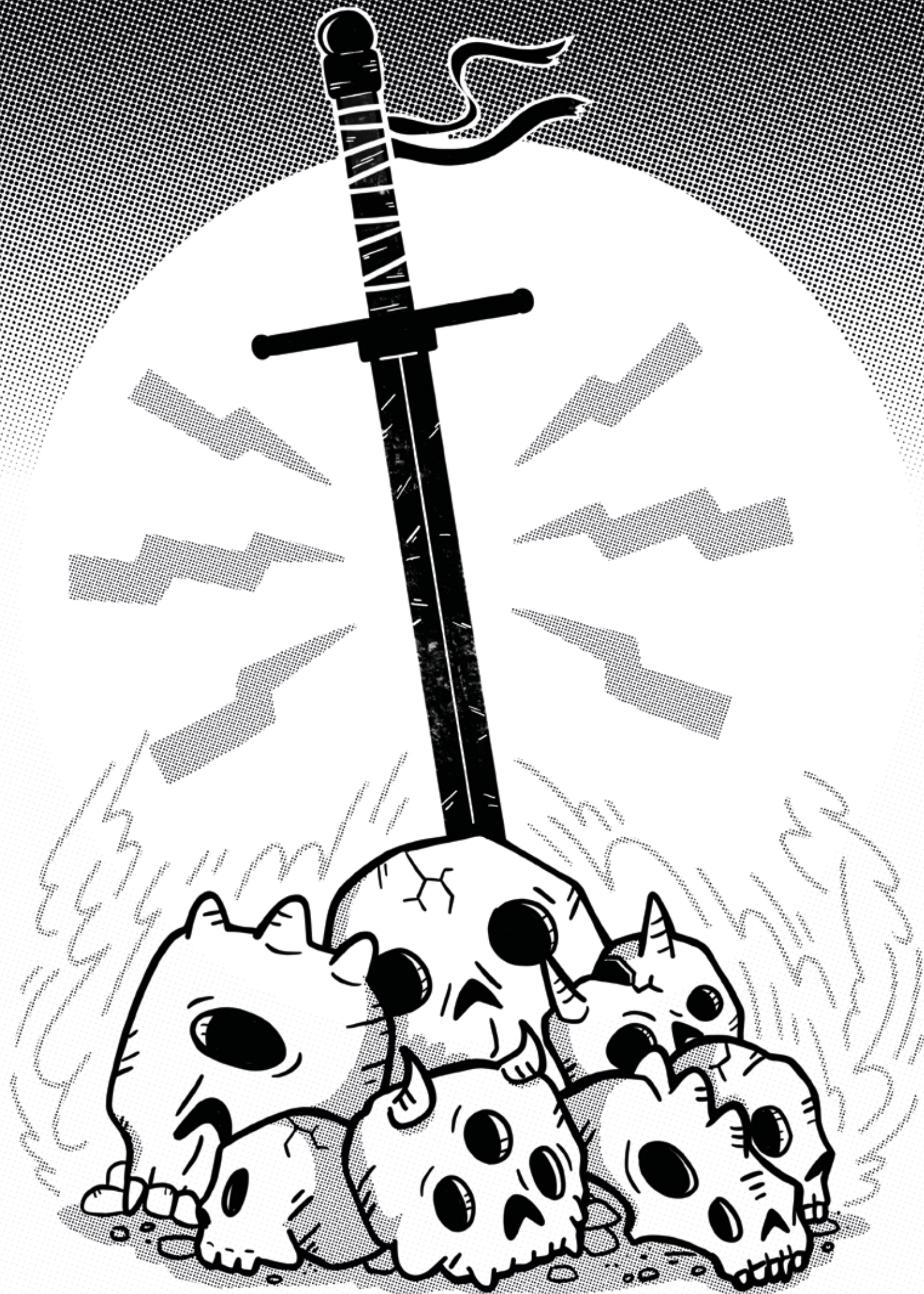
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FILMREEL

LESSONS FROM THE GLOBAL SOUTH: SEEDING CHANGE IN SHEFFIELD & BEYOND

Directed by Jo Barker and Sylvie Planel, produced by Humphrey Lloyd and Holly Black, **In Our Hands** presents what the filmmakers articulate as “the inspiring story behind the blood, sweat and tears of the British farmers seizing the Brexit moment to outgrow the industrial food system”.

A collaboration between small-scale farmers’ union the Land-workers’ Alliance and Black Bark Films, the film aims “to bring people together to think about their food and to bust the myth of the industrial farming system”. It explores and exposes our current industrial food system as “propped up by an outdated subsidy system that pays out to landowners, rather than land workers, and leaves many farmers adrift in its wake”.

But, like Doc/Fest 2016’s audience favourite **Seed**, the film has a positive response to the dire state of UK farming: “From the hedgerows and by-roads, in the fields and in the furrows can be heard the stirring of change. Stories of struggle from the global south have spread like pollen on the wind and inspired farmers around us. They have learned of the idea of food sovereignty and have heard of a global movement to take back control of the food system.

“A new agricultural landscape is emerging, one that will bring back life to the soil, a fair wage to the farmer and a flavour to the tomato.”

All this sounds truly inspiring. Come along to see the film and discuss the issues it raises. Sheffield Organic Growers play a crucial role in both the film and the challenges and changes the film sets out to communicate to us. Focusing on how real-life farmers are taking on the industrial food system, working to defend the fundamental link between people, food and the land, the film’s message is that, despite the uncertainties of our future, “the seeds of a better food system are [...] in our hands.”

Samantha Holland, with thanks to the filmmakers
inourhands.film

In Our Hands, plus Q&A and meet the filmmakers, will screen at Regather Works on Thursday 22 February, 7pm. Tickets are £7 at regather.net.

MY NEIGHBOR TOTORO

Since its release in 1988, **My Neighbor Totoro** has built a massive following across the globe. This 1988 classic by Japanese director Hayao Miyazaki has been called the gateway film into the works of Studio Ghibli, Hayao Miyazaki, and even Japanese animation itself, and it isn’t hard to see why.

This is a film about, and a celebration of, child-like wonder. It’s about the power of imagination, discovery, joy and spirituality. It’s not about conflict, villains and terror, but family and fantasy. It’s no surprise that Totoro himself has become the iconic mascot for Studio Ghibli.

We follow two young girls, Satsuki and Mei, as they move to a new home with their father to be closer to the hospital their mother is in. It’s a simple story of a family making the best of an uncomfortable situation and still finding happiness. Illness is something rarely tackled in animated features, but Miyazaki does it here with grace and subtlety.

But it isn’t all about the family. There are the creatures of the forest that inhabit this strange and wonderful world. Totoro, a spirit animal of Miyazaki’s creation, is no monster. He is a big, fluffy rabbit-like giant that sleeps as long as his smile is wide. Then there is Cat Bus, the other amazing creature of the film’s world, a massive, 12-legged cat which is hollow inside so Totoro can get around town. There really isn’t anything else like it.

The world of My Neighbor Totoro is a quiet and peaceful one, utterly benign. Ironically, given all the majestic outlandishness the film offers, it shows how the stories of our lives are the most compelling. From moment to moment there is so much love between family, friends and nature. The heart of this film grows as you watch it.

2018 marks the 30th anniversary of My Neighbor Totoro. To celebrate this milestone, Reel Steel is screening a 35mm print of the film at Abbeydale Picture House.

Christian Abbott
@reelsteelcinema

My Neighbor Totoro screens at the Abbeydale Picture House on Sunday 25 February, 6pm. Tickets via sivtickets.com.



My Neighbor Totoro (1988)

FILM LISTINGS

HOSTED BY SAMANTHA HOLLAND

2NDLIFE

DIR. BEN JEANS HOUGHTON

18 Jan - 10 Feb | Bloc Projects

A single channel film embedded in an installation, **2ndlife** is a first-person film essay using places and protagonists encountered on a journey through Japan to explore perspectives on suicide, giving voice to places, objects, animals and the Internet in dialogue with the protagonist. blocprojects.co.uk

THE BANISHMENT

DIR. ANDREY ZVYAGINTSEV, 2007

Thu 8 Feb | 8pm | Showroom Cinema | £8.80/£6.60

One of director Zvyagintsev’s most darkly sinister films, *Izgnanie* examines an urban family’s mysterious banishment to a pastoral setting. Influenced by Tarkovsky and loaded with religious metaphors, critics are split on whether it’s powerful stuff or pseudo deep.

showroomworkstation.org.uk/the-banishment

THE KILLING OF A SACRED DEER

DIR. YORGOS LANTHIMOS

Fri 16 Feb | 7:30pm | Nelson Mandela Auditorium, SU | £3

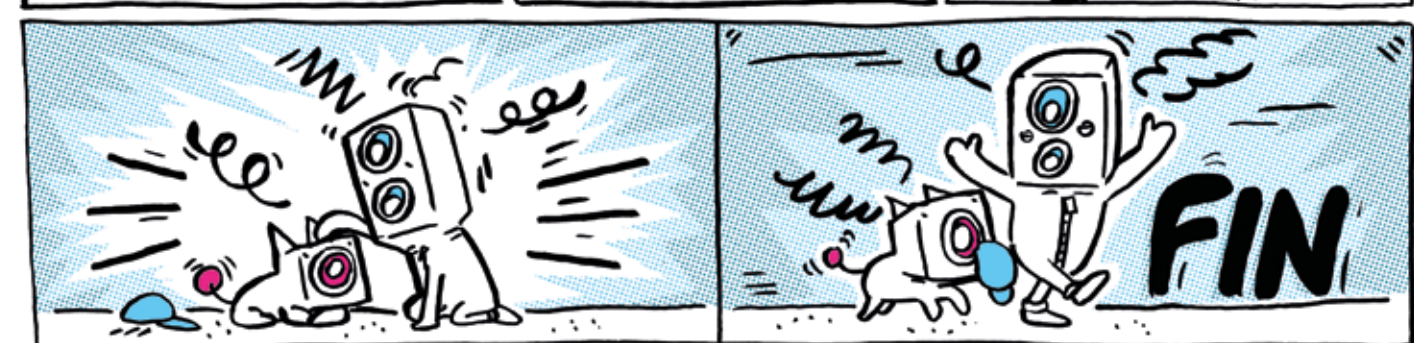
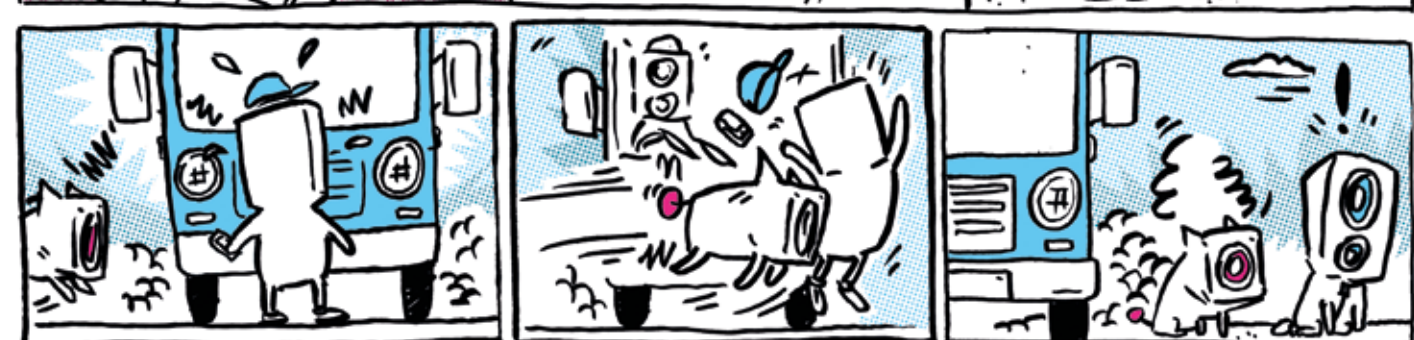
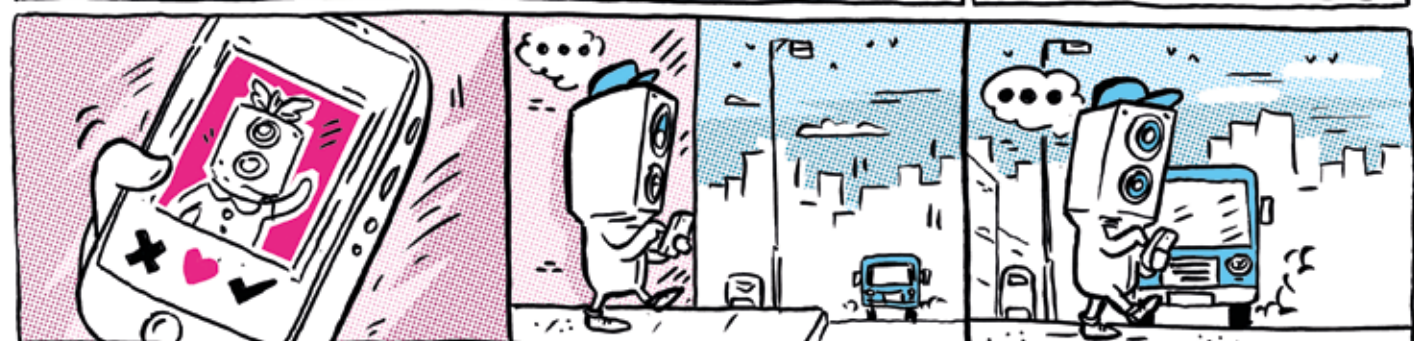
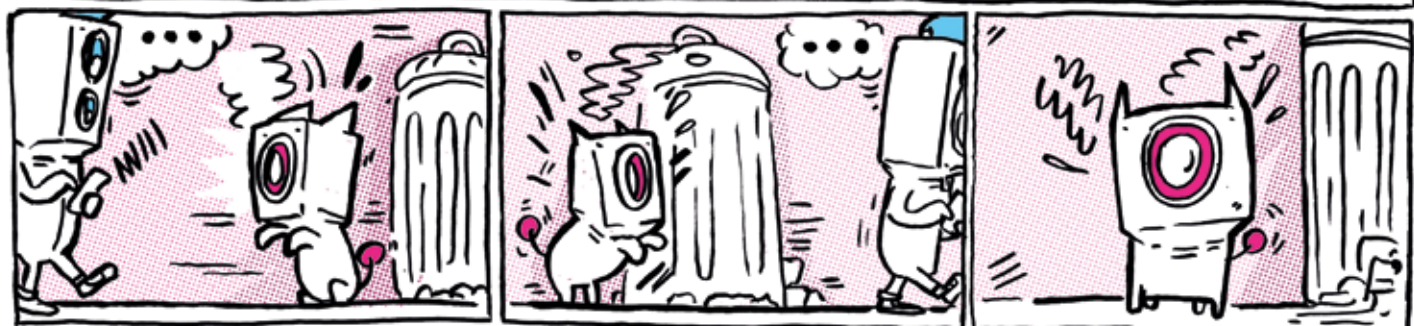
Critically-acclaimed psychological horror from the director of **The Lobster**, this film was described by several critics as a ‘tough sit’. Weird and unsettling, in true Lanthimos style.

DARK RIVER

DIR. CLIO BARNARD, 2017

National release: Fri 23 Feb

An intense battle-for-land drama, **Dark River**’s troubled tale of an estranged brother and sister unfurls amongst the brooding landscapes around Skipton and Malham. Starring Ruth Wilson, Mark Stanley and Sean Bean, Barnard’s third film credits Rose Tremain’s acclaimed 2010 novel, **Trespass**, as its inspiration, but promises dark cinematic tragedy played out in rural Yorkshire. screenyorkshire.co.uk/showcase/clio-barnards-dark-river


WWW.LEADMILL.CO.UK

FAVOURITES

OUR PICK OF INDEPENDENT SHEFFIELD



ST LUKE'S

stlukeshospice.org.uk/events
0114 235 7553

St Luke's provides care for thousands of adults across Sheffield with a terminal illness, ensuring they have the best quality of life possible and that they and their families are supported during some of the most difficult times of their lives – all free of charge. Most of their patients never come to the hospice itself, but benefit hugely from the community nursing team and its other services.

The NHS only provides 24% of St Luke's funding, so in order to continue its vital work the charity has to raise £6.3 million in 2018.

Each year, many Sheffielders undertake all manner of fundraising and volunteering activities, as well as supporting St Luke's via its shops or by making a donation. The charity has a number of 'active challenges' for 2018, including: the Sheffield half marathon (8 April); the Sheffield 10K (23 September); the Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge (26 miles in 12 hours, 23 June); Night Strider night-time 10K or half marathon, complete with neon and light-up accessories (6 October); skydiving from 15,000ft (21 April or 8 July); and – definitely most terrifying – "being strapped to the top of a bi-plane flying at 130mph" (26 May).

All these challenges have a minimum fundraising level and a registration fee, but St Luke's are offering our readers 5% off registration when they mention Now Then.

Why not do something you wouldn't normally do for a good cause?



FESTIVAL OF DEBATE 2018

20 April - 29 June
festivalofdebate.com

Coordinated by Opus and Now Then, Festival of Debate is an annual programme of public events exploring the most important social and political issues of our day. We started it in the run-up to the General Election in 2015 and since then we've run hundreds of events, from intimate workshops to large keynote speakers, including George Monbiot, Shami Chakrabarti, Peter Tatchell, Martha Spurrier and John Pilger.

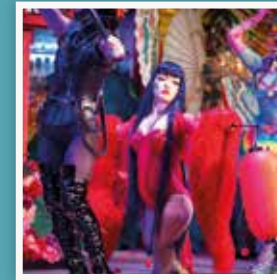
A colossal group effort, delivered in collaboration with over 40 partner organisations, 2018's festival will feature 60+ events. We're not quite ready to announce the programme yet – keep 'em peeled in early March – but in the meantime we thought we'd let you know how you can get involved.

Much of Festival of Debate operates through the passion and hard work of volunteers. We are always open to bringing new people in to help plan, deliver and document the festival. If you have particular skills you think might be useful, or if you're just looking for something meaningful to fill your time, we'd love to hear from you. If you'd like to sign up to accompany someone experiencing isolation, loneliness or other barriers to a Festival of Debate event, you can get involved with our 'Be A Pal' scheme, operated in collaboration with Tickets For Good and Voluntary Action Sheffield.

Reach out at hello@festivalofdebate.com.

JAPAN NOW NORTH

21 Feb - 3 Mar
sheffield.ac.uk/seas



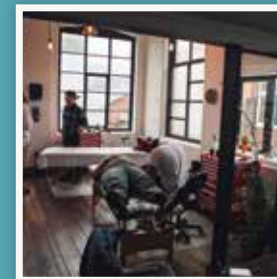
Japan Now North is a week-long celebration of the cultural output of Japan. The School of East Asian Studies at the University of Sheffield is one of Europe's leading research and teaching centres for Japanese Studies, and they have done a stellar job of co-organising this programme of events with artists, filmmakers and authors, many of which are free entry.

A key highlight is a talk by prominent photographer and filmmaker Mika Ninagawa (Town Hall, Sat 24 Feb, 3pm), whose work shows a particular interest in strong female characters and the use of colour. Sheffield will also welcome the UK premiere of documentary, **A Whale of a Tale** (Showroom, Mon 26 Feb, 6pm), Megumi Sasaki's exploration of the controversial topic of whaling, followed by a Q&A with the director.

Elsewhere in the programme, Richard Lloyd Parry discusses his acclaimed book, **Ghosts of the Tsunami**, about Japan's 2011 tsunami (Graves Gallery, Tue 27 Feb, 6pm), and Tokyo-based artist and educator Suzanne Mooney presents a solo exhibition at Bloc (Wed 21 Feb - Sat 3 Mar). There's loads more listed on the SEAS website.

WORKHOUSE TATTOO CO

43 Caledonia Works,
Mowbray Street, S3 8EN
theworkhousetattooco.com



Tucked away in an old factory building in the ever-developing Kelham Island is the Workhouse Tattoo Company. Founded in July of last year by artist Cal Jenx, the ethos of the studio is to take tattooing away from street shops and into a calmer, more focussed environment. Each artist has only one or two clients per day, with regular guest artists from across the globe also using the Workhouse as a base.

Stylistically, Cal and the team want to step away from Americanised motifs and towards something that feels more natural, something which reflects the heritage and working-class history of Sheffield.

The best way to keep up with the work of the studio is via social media, but they also encourage people to get involved by hosting regular art nights, where anyone from tattoo artists and illustrators to passionate doodlers can socialise, share work and collaborate. Follow them and get connected.

ROCO

338-346 Glossop Road,
S10 2HW
theroco.org



ROCO recently completed phase 2 of their development of a cluster of buildings on Glossop Road, between the Harley and the Students' Union, so now seems as good a time as any to update you on the efforts of this ambitious social enterprise.

ROCO is many things to many people, featuring over 40 studios, meeting and conference spaces, galleries, a shop, a cafe bar and plenty more, all with a focus on enriching the city's social and cultural output. Soon they will also open a 'makerspace', featuring all kinds of high-tech gadgetry, like laser cutters and 3D printers, for the design and creation of beautiful and functional things.

Brood Cafe Bar is open to the public six days a week and The Goods Store is the place for ethical, beautifully-designed homeware, ceramics, books and stationary. ROCO also put on regular events, including the new Doodle Club, hosted by this month's Now Then featured artist and ROCO tenant, Geo Law.

There are currently new spaces available for rent at ROCO, so if you're interested, reach out via the usual digital channels.

LEADMILL COMEDY CLUB

24 Feb, 31 Mar
leadmill.co.uk



The Leadmill's Comedy Club has been a popular fixture on Sheffield's comedy circuit for five years and has enjoyed such great success that they're now launching a monthly weekend night.

The first Saturday event on 24 February looks set to be a real treat and as usual they'll be bringing you the cream of the comedy crop from TV and radio, with charismatic com-per Jonathan Mayor overseeing proceedings.

February's line-up features three top-notch comedians, including master of anecdotal storytelling, Geoff Norcott, Mercury Comedian of the Year nominee, Danny Ward, and Club Comic of the Year, Tom Ward.

Delicious Mexican food will also be available throughout the evening from local favourites The Street Food Chef, and if you're looking for somewhere to go afterwards, look no further than The Leadmill's weekend club nights, GAGA and Sonic, entry to which is included with your Comedy Club ticket. Get your tables reserved and get ready to giggle.

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THERION
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+ NULL POSITIV

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FRI 16TH MAR - £10 ADV - 6.30PM *#

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SAT 24TH MAR - £9 ADV - 6.30PM *#

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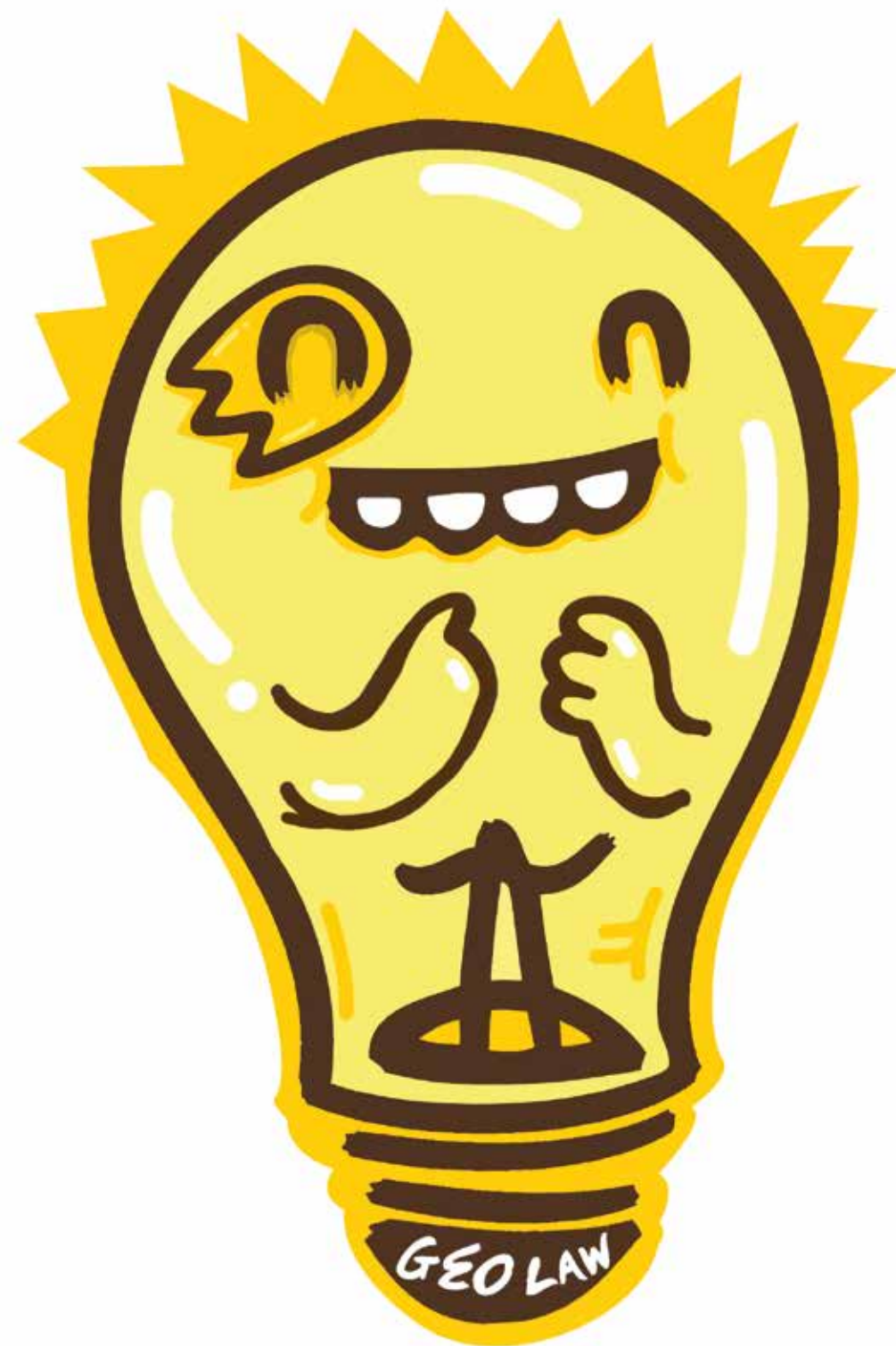
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NOW THEN.

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THANKS FOR READING.**